

# Appendix 1-1: Overview of the Peer-Review Process for the 2011 South Florida Environmental Report – Volume I

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## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PEER-REVIEW PROCESS

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The draft *2011 South Florida Environmental Report (SFER) – Volume I* was prepared during summer 2010 and posted in September 2010 for external peer and public review on the South Florida Water Management District's (SFWMDC or District) website at [www.sfwmd.gov/sfer](http://www.sfwmd.gov/sfer). In accordance with the Everglades Forever Act requirement for scientific peer review [Subparagraph 373.4592(4)(d)5, Florida Statutes], an expert panel received the draft report. The external review was organized in accordance with (1) typical scientific review practices, (2) the independent panel review process required by Florida Statutes for evaluating Minimum Flows and Levels [Subsection 373.042 (4), Florida Statutes], and (3) Government in the Sunshine provisions of the Florida Statutes. The panel reviewed this report independently and then interacted with each other over the public-accessible SFER WebBoard linked to the District's SFER website.

An overview of the 2011 SFER peer-review process is presented in **Table 1**. A Statement of Work (SOW) was prepared for the specific tasks and roles assigned to the SFER panelists as part of this year's peer-review process. Volume I chapters and their associated levels of review were defined in the panel's assignment matrix in the SOW (see **Tables 2** and **3**). Through purchase orders, the panel provided the following services per the SOW:

- **Read assigned draft 2011 SFER – Volume I chapters.** Broad reading of previous consolidated reports was encouraged as general background for the draft 2011 SFER – Volume I review, as appropriate. These earlier reports and other agency reports were made available through the District's website, as needed. Panelists reviewed their assigned draft 2011 SFER – Volume I chapters and prepared chapter-specific written reviews including comments and questions to be addressed by SFER authors. Panel comments were submitted to the District via the SFER WebBoard by September 17, 2010.

To enhance the SFER peer review, a tri-level review was incorporated again into this year's streamlined process. As outlined in **Table 2**, each panelist reviewed assigned portions of the draft report according to three levels: progress review (accountability), project review (technical), and program review (integrative).

- **Develop a final report with conclusions and recommendations.** Following the written review provided by the panelists as well as public comments, the SFER authors posted their responses to comments on the SFER WebBoard by October 8, 2010. Subsequently, the panelists reviewed these responses and prepared their final conclusions and recommendations for each chapter, representing a final

report. Public comments contributed during the review on the SFER WebBoard were also considered by the panel, as appropriate. The panel's final comments were submitted to the District via the SFER WebBoard by October 22, 2010.

- District staff presented an overview of the panel's key findings and recommendations on the draft 2011 SFER – Volume I at the agency's Governing Board workshop on November 9, 2010, in Fort Meyers, FL.

During the 2011 SFER peer-review process, the public and panel review resulted in many written comments and suggestions to the report's authors. Comments from the peer-review panel on the draft 2011 SFER – Volume I, as posted on the SFER WebBoard, are provided in Appendix 1-2. Public comments posted to this WebBoard are provided in Appendix 1-3. The authors' responses to these initial comments are provided in Appendix 1-4. Appendix 1-5 contains the 2011 panel's closing comments and recommendations, representing its final report. Advice from the SFER panel and from other reviewers provided guidance to the Volume I authors through revisions while preparing the final 2011 SFER – Volume I.

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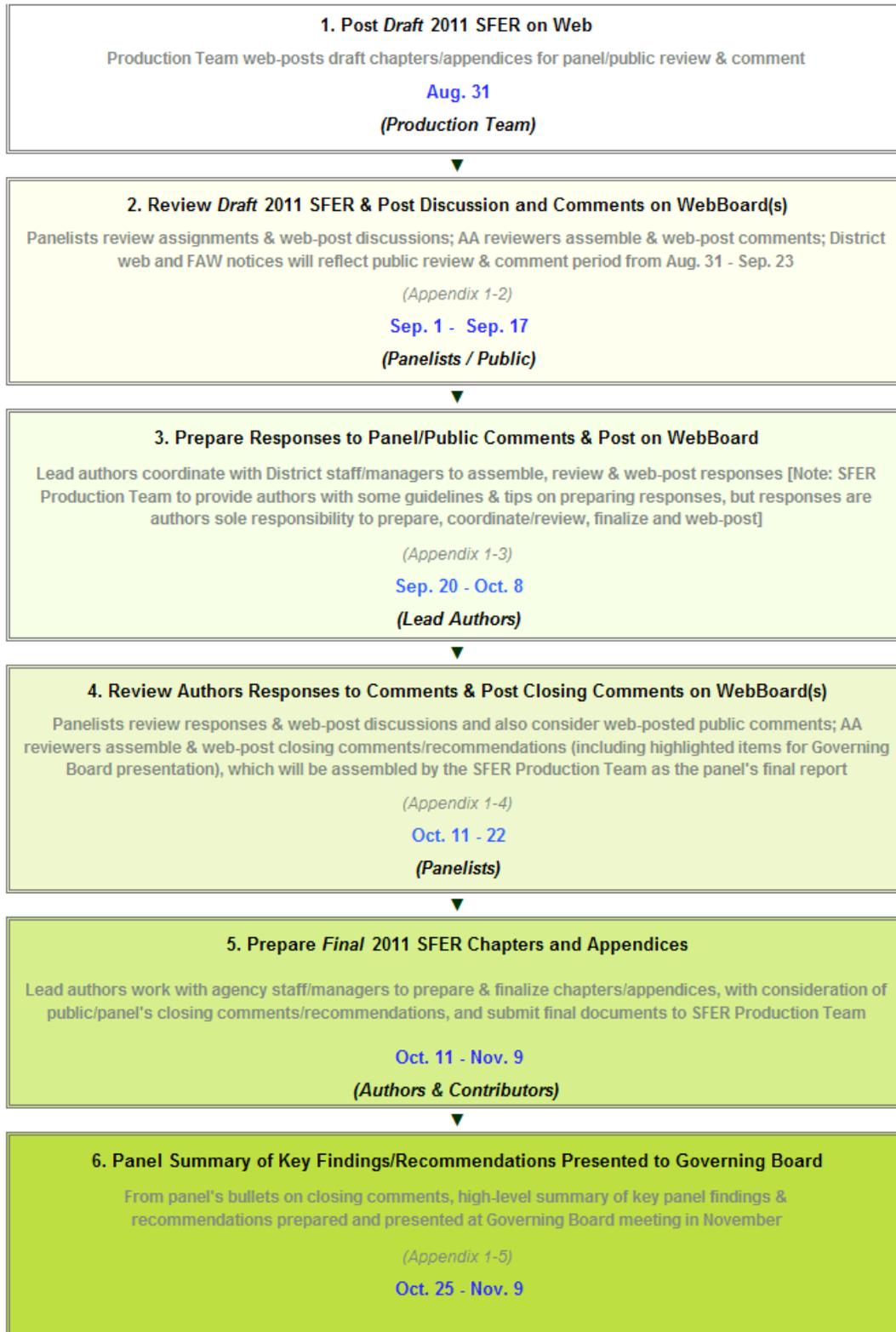
## **2011 SFER PEER-REVIEW PANELISTS**

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The selection of panelists for the draft 2011 SFER – Volume I review was primarily based on preceding consolidated report reviews. Consistent with these earlier reviews and with routine practice in scientific peer review, professional expertise and experience in the major subject areas covered by this report were the main criteria used for selecting this year's panelists. Knowledge of environmental management and decision making was also an important consideration. To ensure their independence, panelists continued to be free of any professional connection to interests or organizations in South Florida. Based on these considerations, four returning panelists from last year's review process joined three, new panelists to form the following list of experts for this year's review:

- Dr. Joanna Burger, Professor, Division of Life Sciences, Rutgers University, Piscataway, NJ
- Dr. JoAnn M. Burkholder, Professor and Director, Center for Applied Aquatic Ecology, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC
- Dr. Peter Dillon, Professor in Environmental & Resource Studies and Chemistry Departments, and Director, Water Quality Centre, Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada
- Dr. Vladimir Novotny, Chair Professor and Director of the Center for Urban Environmental Studies, Northeastern University, Boston, MA
- Dr. Vijay Singh, Caroline and William N. Lehrer Distinguished Chair in Water Engineering, Professor of Biological and Agricultural Engineering, and Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Texas A & M University, College Station, TX
- Dr. Otto R. Stein, Professor, Department of Civil Engineering, Montana State University, Bozeman, MT
- Dr. Robert C. Ward, Director and Professor Emeritus, Colorado Water Resources Research Institute, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO

**Table 1.** Overview of the draft *2011 South Florida Environmental Report – Volume I* (SFER) peer-review process.



**Table 2.** Draft 2011 SFER – Volume I chapter assignments of the peer-review panelists.

2011 SFER Panelists	Ch. 2	Ch. 3	Ch. 4	Ch. 5	Ch. 6	Ch. 7	Ch. 8	Ch. 9	Ch. 10	Ch. 11	Ch. 12
J. Burger		AA (3B)			A			AA			A
J. Burkholder					AA	A		A			AA
O. Stein	A/AA	A (3B)		AA			A				
R. Ward		A (3A)	A			AA	AA				
V. Singh	AA			A						AA	
P. Dillon					A				AA	A/AA	
V. Novotny	A	AA (3A)	AA						A		

**Table 3.** Peer-review levels associated with the draft 2011 SFER – Volume I assignments.

2011 SFER Chapter	Level of Panel Review		
	Accountability	Technical	Integrative
Ch. 2 – Hydrology	Primary		X
Ch. 3A – Water Quality	Primary		X
Ch. 3B – Mercury and Sulfur		Primary	X
Ch. 4 – Source Control Programs	Primary	X	
Ch. 5 – STA Performance	X	Primary	
Ch. 6 – Everglades Ecology		Primary	X
Ch. 7 – Everglades Restoration	Primary		X
Ch. 8 – Long-Term Plan	Primary		X
Ch. 9 – Invasive Species		X	Primary
Ch. 10 – Lake Okeechobee	X	Primary	
Ch. 11 – Kissimmee Basin		Primary	X
Ch. 12 – Coastal Ecosystems		Primary	X

**Progress Review (Accountability):** This level of review targets progress in District programs and projects and is aimed at chapters and sections that are more routine nature, reporting in a similar format and content from year to year.

**Project Review (Technical):** This level of review is a more traditional peer review aimed primarily at projects and products and associated methodology and findings and provides detailed input on science and engineering.

**Program Review (Integrative):** This level is programmatic in nature exploring cross-cutting themes and the connections between research and projects and is applicable to many chapters and sections of the report.